THE CONQUEST OF QUEBEC: A POEM.

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Επίσταθι γὰρ δήπου ὅτι οὔτε πλῆθός ἐστιν, οὔτε ἰσχὺς ἡ ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ τὰς νίκας ποιοῦσα· ἀλλ' ὁπότεροι ἂν σὺν τοῖς θεοῖς ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἐρρωμενέστεροι ἴωσιν ἐπὶ τοὺς πολεμίους. Xenoph. Cyri Exped. lib. 3.

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THE *following Exerciſe having been honoured with the Prize given by the Right Honourable the Earl of* Litchfield, *Chancellor of the Univerſity of* Oxford, *for the beſt Engliſh Verſes on this Subject, compoſed by ſuch Members of the Univerſity as had not exceeded four Years from their Matriculation; was afterwards publicly recited in the* Theatre, *on the Sixth of* July, *being the annual Commemoration of the Benefactors to the Univerſity.*

THE CONQUEST of QUEBEC.

FAREWELL ye Naiads who your Treſſes lave
Where Isis rolls her unpolluted Wave,
Far off to Regions unexplored I fly,
To ſavage Nations and a frozen Sky,
Where the LAURENTIAN Stream his copious Stores
In whitening Torrents to th' ATLANTIC pours,
Where never Echo his ſteep Banks along
Heard the ſweet Accents of a Muſe's Song,
But Shouts of barb'rous Diſſonance reſound,
And Blood of Warriors bathes the reeking Ground.

Long time the baſhful Muſe content to ſtray
Where liſt'ning Swains approv'd her ſimple Lay,
By art untutour'd and unknown to Fame,
Had learnt to warble only DELIA's Name;
Nor from her ſilent Caves and Grottoes led
Had dar'd the crimſon Fields of War to tread:
New ardors now her throbbing Breaſt invade,
For Themes untried She quits the chequer'd Shade,
Fierce Tranſport bears her o'er th' embattled Plain,
And ſofter pleaſures call her back in vain.
So from the Toils of martial Service freed
Thro' flow'ry Meadows roves the Warrior Steed,
Now plunges in the River's criſtal Tide,
To ſlake his Thirſt or cool his glowing Side;
Now on ſoft Herbage rolls in wanton play,
And lengthens out with Eaſe th' inglorious Day;
But when the Trumpet's piercing Clangor ſounds
He leaps indignant o'er oppoſing Mounds,
Untaſted leaves the guſting Rill behind,
And flies to Fame impetuous as the Wind.

Where on a Cliff QUEBEC's high Tow'rs ariſe,
Braving with warlike ſhew the neighb'ring Skies,
WOLFE all the various Arts of Combat tried,
And pour'd his Thunders on its rocky Side;
But tho' unſhaken ſtand the ſolid Walls
While ceaſeleſs the reſounding Tempeſt falls,
Victorious Hopes his dauntleſs Breaſt inſpire,
Nor Danger can appal nor Labour tire;
Armies from him receive the gen'rous Rage
And with new Strength increaſing Toils engage;
Where thro' the Ranks he turns his glowing Eyes
Again th' expiring Flames of Battle riſe.

E'er the ſtill Evening's duſky Shades prevail'd
Far up the Stream the crouded Veſſels ſail'd;
There the bold Chief unfolds his mighty Plan,
And martial Fury ſpreads from Man to Man.
Till on her ſable Pinions Night deſcends
And round the Bands her friendly Veil extends;
Then ſwiftly borne by the retreating Tide
Unſeen and ſilent o'er the Waves the glide,

And winding cautious near the hoſtile Shore
Its treach'rous Shoals and op'ning Creeks explore;
Till ſafely the appointed ſtrand they reach
And ſpring tumultuous on the ſlipp'ry Beach.

Where riſing Hills the weſtern Tow'rs encloſe,
And weak of Fabric the low Bulwark roſe,
Where FRANCE had truſted no advent'rous Foe
Could gain the Mountain lab'ring from below,
Planting his Feet againſt its ſteepy Side
Foremoſt preſs'd Valour on with daring Stride,
Sage Conduct, Reſolution void of Fear,
And Perſeverance clos'd th' unſhaken Rear:
Arduous they climb; and where the dubious Way
Perplex'd with Brakes and twiſting Branches lay
Thro' pathleſs Wilds and unfrequented Shades
Eager tho' ſlow advance the bold Brigades,
With ceaſeleſs Toil its craggy Side aſcend,
And their thick Phalanx o'er the Plain extend.

Soon from th' ATLANTIC roſe the golden Day,
Diſpell'd the Gloom, and roll'd the Miſts away,

To

To riſing Winds the Red-croſs Banners ſtream,
And the bright Arms of thronging Cohorts gleam;
The Sons of GAUL with Horror in their Eye
Thro' ſcatter'd Fogs the ſudden Luſtre ſpy;
Theſe from their Poſts in wild Confuſion ſtart,
Theſe haſte the fatal Tidings to impart,
The ſavage Bands awake their deathful Yell,
And the loud Shout with hideous Diſcord ſwell:
Yet e'er the Legions to cloſe Combat ran
Some choſen Warriors preſs'd before the Van,
Where treach'rous Shrubs protect the ſecret Stand
In dreadful Ambuſh lurk th' inſidious Band,
No vulgar Deaths attend their fatal Aim,
But Warrior Chiefs the Fav'rite Sons of Fame.

WOLFE in the Front of Danger led the Way,
And with ſtern Pleaſure view'd the cloſe Array,
On him their Eyes the latent Warriors bend
And leaden Deaths in hiſſing Show'rs deſcend;
His manly Arm receives the griſly Wound,
And the red Current ſtreams upon the Ground:

Yet from his Troops the prudent Chief conceal'd
The guſhimg Tide, and ſtrode along the Field.
At length the Battle, Front to Front oppos'd,
In Deeds of Death and furious Onſet clos'd;
Now echoing Peals of mortal Thunder roar,
And pitchy Volumes cloud the Combat o'er;
Now burſting Flames the Waſte of War diſplay,
And for a while recall the Gleam of Day.
So when thick Flaſhes of the Northern Light
With ſtreamy Sparkles gild the Face of Night,
Sudden the blazing Coruſcations fly,
Riſe the bright Hills and meet th' aſtoniſh'd Eye,
Sudden the momentary Proſpects fade,
And Earth lies buried in ſurrounding Shade.

Mean time fair Vict'ry o'er the crimſon Plains
Hov'ring, her Scale in equal Poiſe ſuſtains,
Soon as to ALBION's Sons the Goddeſs flew
The GAULS retire, the Victor Troops purſue,
In black Deſpair recoils the fainting Band,
Sunk is each Heart and weaken'd ev'ry Hand.

But

But while the Britiſh Chief his Troops led on
To pluck thoſe Laurels which their Arms had won,
Some winged Fate his mighty Boſom tore,
And low to Earth the gallant Warrior bore;
His Friends with Pity mark his parting Breath,
And pauſe ſuſpended from the Work of Death:
No more the vanquiſh'd in their ſcatter'd Rear
His well known Voice inſpiring Terrors hear,
Elate with Joy the bleeding Chief they view,
And the long Labours of the Day renew.
Now their defeated Hopes the BRITONS mourn
And from their Graſp the Wreath of Conqueſt torn;
Till thro' the breaking Squadrons TOWNSHEND flies,
Revenge and Fury ſparkling in his Eyes,
Fierce over ſlaughter'd Heroes tow'rs along,
Collects the War and fires the yielding Throng.

Mean while their Chief his ſad Aſſociates laid
Beneath the Covert of a neighb'ring Shade;
Thence, as the ſanguine Torrent ebb'd away,
He ſtrove the Scene of Tumult to ſurvey,

Rous'd by the martial Thunder of the Field,
By fits his dim expiring Eyes unſeal'd;
Then ſick'ning at the piercing Blaze of Light
Turn'd from the Ranks of War his aching Sight;
Yet fondly anxious for his Country's Fame,
Long as the vital Spirit feeds its Flame,
Oft he requires of each attending Friend
O'er the wide Plain their careful View to ſend,
And mark if GAUL the conqu'ring Bands repell'd,
Or yet their flight the broken Legions held.
"Sweet Peace be thine, replied the Warrior Train,
"In this ſad Hour and ſoften ev'ry Pain,
"For lo! thy TOWNSHEND at his People's Head
"Urges the Rout and conquers in thy Stead,
"Reſiſtleſs bids the Tide of Slaughter flow,
"Scatters their Ranks and lays their Heroes low."
To whom the Chief; "I die, ſince this is giv'n,
"Content, and aſk no other Boon of Heav'n."
He could no more; th' unfiniſh'd Accents hung
In Sounds imperfect on his falt'ring Tongue,
His mighty Spirit fled, and mix'd with Wind;
Yet Virtue left a conſcious Smile behind.

Nor

Nor longer now the bloody Slaughter rag'd
With diſtant Thunders; Man with Man engag'd:
Thoſe who from CALEDONIAN Hills deſcend,
Where tow'ring Cliffs their rugged Arms extend,
(Stern Sons of Havoc, practis'd to obey
The various Calls of ev'ry dreadful Day,
Now in cloſe Order and collected Might
To wait the Tumult of advancing Fight,
Now fearleſs the divided Lines expand,
Ravage at large and mingle Hand to Hand!)
With piercing Cries the hoſtile Files invade,
And ſhake aloft in Air the maſſy Blade;
Where'er their Faulchions heap the Slaughter round
Crouds roll'd on Crouds beſtrew the loaded Ground,
While ruſhing to the Front with equal Speed,
Their brave Companions of the War ſucceed.

With deſp'rate Anguiſh torn and glowing Shame
That ill Succeſſes blaſt his ancient Fame
MONCALM, in vain exerting ev'ry Art,
Performs a Leader's and a Warrior's Part,

But now no more his keen Reproach controuls
The Coward Terrors that unman their Souls,
No Senſe of Glory fires the Vet'ran's Breaſt
With Horror chill'd and Heav'n-bred Awe depreſt.
As, where his Squadrons urg'd their Courſe along,
Raging he travers'd the diſorder'd Throng,
Some Britiſh Faulchion ſped the deathful Wound,
And hew'd th' indignant Chieftain to the Ground;
Wedg'd in the Rout the gaſping Heroe lay,
And with faint Murmur ſigh'd his Soul away.

To ſwifter Flight the Gallic Legions yield,
And trembling quit the long conteſted Field;
Part haſten to the Stream whoſe Waves contain
Th' extenſive Limits of the fatal Plain,
Part to the Bulwarks, from whoſe lofty Height
Their Friends deſponding view th' unequal Fight.

Soon as the Morrow's Sun with genial Ray
To the bleak Climate gave returning Day,
The Victor's Mercy Gallia's Sons implore,
And truſt the fickle Chance of War no more;

Their

Their ample Gates unfold; along the Strand
In ſilent Sorrow moves the vanquiſh'd Band,
While fluſh'd with Triumph and of Conqueſt vain
Pours tow'rd the captive Walls the Britiſh Train.

Thus from their Toil the glorious Heroes reſt,
And peaceful Rapture ſwells in ev'ry Breaſt,
Save that as oft the glowing Tale they tell
Of ſuch as bravely fought or greatly fell,
WOLFE's early Fate their penſive Mind employs,
And manly Sorrows check their riſing Joys.

Illuſtrious Shade! if artleſs Hands like mine
Could for an Heroe's Urn the Chaplet twine,
The Muſe for thee ſhould cull each op'ning Bloom,
And with unfading Garlands deck thy Tomb;
For oh! What Youth whoſe rev'rent Feet are led
To thoſe ſad Manſions of the mighty Dead
Where martial Trophies in rich Sculpture ſhow
The ſacred Aſhes that repoſe below,
But kindling at the View for Glory burns
As on thy Name his ſparkling Eyes he turns?

Ages to come ſhall thy great Story hear,
And pay the pious tribute of a Tear,
Thy wond'rous Deeds ſhall Vet'ran Sires recite,
Thy Prudence in Debate, thy Toils in Fight,
And ev'ry Warrior to the Tale reply
"Be mine like him to conquer, and to die."

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